THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

June 8, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole (R-OK)
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins (R-ME)
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray (D-WA)
Vice Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Collins and Vice Chair Murray:

On behalf of the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC) — and the students, staff, faculty and alumni our institutions serve — thank you for your leadership in passing final fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations bills during what has been an especially challenging appropriations cycle. We are especially grateful for the continued investments in higher education programs that bolster student affordability. As you begin the FY 2027 process, we urge you to continue to prioritize critical financial aid and student support programs.

Our state's longstanding commitment to public higher education ensures that all Californians have access to high-quality, affordable education and workforce training opportunities. Together, our institutions represent the largest system of higher education in the nation, serving nearly 3 million students. While we educate the next-generation workforce and cultivate future entrepreneurs and inventors, our shared mission extends far beyond the classroom. Every day, our institutions conduct groundbreaking research that shapes the nation's response to security threats, deadly and devastating diseases, public health and safety challenges such as wildfire and drought, and emerging technological challenges.

Our systems provide traditional and non-traditional students alike with the skills and opportunities needed to thrive in a competitive workforce and contribute to the American economy. The graduates, inventions and companies that emerge from California's public higher education institutions help drive our state's innovation economy and strengthen the nation's economy. Collectively, our institutions generate more than $286.6 billion in overall economic activity and support more than 2.1 million jobs across California.

Ensuring that our systems continue to provide opportunities for all students, regardless of background or income, while remaining global innovation leaders, is essential to the growth and prosperity of California and our country. Central to the upward mobility that higher education enables is federal student aid, which in combination with state and institutional support, provides our students with the means to attend and succeed at institutions of higher education.

For FY 2027, we urge increased investments in the following:

- **Pell Grant Funding.** Pell Grants benefit low-income students and provide key support to hundreds of thousands of students at all three of our systems. By increasing the maximum Pell Grant, Congress can reverse decades of erosion to a program of critical importance to building the workforce on which our country relies. We request that the maximum annual Pell Grant be increased from the current level of $7,395 to $7,595, indexed to inflation, and that additional funds be provided to address the Pell Grant budget shortfall.

- **Campus-Based Aid Programs.** In addition to the Pell Grant, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and Federal Work-Study (FWS) programs provide the most financially vulnerable students with additional support in obtaining their degree. We request $966 million for SEOG and $1.306 billion for FWS.

- **Pipeline Programs.** While many of our priorities center on the education a student receives while attending our institutions, the value that K-12 pipeline programs bring to higher education cannot be overstated. The federal GEAR UP and TRIO programs bring students from underserved communities into an environment that fosters academic achievement, reduces barriers to entry to postsecondary education and encourages persistence. Increased investments in these programs ensure that more students who are eligible for GEAR UP and TRIO have access to quality programming that supports their future success in higher education. We request $410 million for GEAR UP and $1.227 billion for TRIO.

- **Capacity-Building at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).** Our systems reflect the rich diversity of California's communities, and many of our institutions are designated as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs). Increasing this funding will further enhance our efforts to expand educational opportunities, improve attainment and enhance program quality. We request $19 million for Title III, Part A, Section 320 (the AANAPISI Program); $350 million for Title V, Part A (the HSI Program); and $150 million for Title V, Part B. We also urge Congress to carry over and strengthen federal guardrails for MSI programs from FY 2026 to ensure that institutions can procure these funds.

- **Student Basic Needs.** Across our three systems, addressing students' basic needs remains a top priority. This is essential to ensuring students have the resources needed to achieve their full potential. The rising cost of college, coupled with the high cost of living, has made it increasingly difficult for students to manage expenses, especially those from low-income and economically vulnerable backgrounds. Programs like the Basic Needs Pilot Program and Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools (CCAMPIS) go a long way in meeting the specific challenges our students face. We request $45 million for the Basic Needs Pilot Program and $85 million for the CCAMPIS Program.

In addition, we encourage the largest possible allocation for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill given the significant funding shortfall facing the Pell Grant program.

Thank you for your support of California students and our public higher education systems. If you have any questions about this letter or the work of our institutions, please contact our federal governmental relations staff. At the UC, contact Chris Harrington (chris.harrington@ucdc.edu, 202-974-6314); at the CSU, contact Jeff Cullen (jcullen@calstate.edu, 771-241-1469); and at the CCC, contact David O'Brien (dobrien@cccco.edu, 650-704-9477).

Sincerely,

James B. Milliken	Mildred García	Sonya Christian
President	Chancellor	Chancellor
University of California	California State University	California Community Colleges

CC: California Congressional Delegation